



Hello everyone,

As I write this, the Spring sunshine and warmth that we have hoped for has arrived and doesn't it make such a difference? Those friends I meet on my walks around the village seem to smile and joke more, and our conversations are less about our problems and ailments and more about getting out and about and enjoying the coming summer activities. I believe that with the coming of Spring most of us not only feel better but actually are better. It is as if we have had a free boost in our physical, mental and emotional states. I am pretty sure that most of us would agree, but what might seem obvious to us, is very difficult to prove to scientists and accountants, and there lies the rub for small community projects like ours.

Recently, I was asked if I had numerical data that showed how effective The Debenham Project was in reducing admissions to care homes. I answered no, pointing out that such a statistic could not be calculated with any meaningful accuracy, and that judging individual community projects by such numbers, as if they were the same as large organisations, is not realistic – we do different things, have different objectives, involve much smaller numbers of individuals, who are much more diverse in their problems and needs. Yet we know that community projects definitely do deliver amazing benefits (Debenham is by no means unique.) which are not only directly helping those in need, but also, and at the same time, saving the NHS and Social Services substantial sums of money. So, how can we argue this to be actually the case, which brings me back to “feeling better, being better”?

What our project does is to offer activities and services that can help make the lives of family carers and those they care for feel just a bit (and often a lot) better – individual support, an afternoon to look forward to, timely advice, friendship, laughter, knowing that they are not alone, and many other **things that boost “well-being” and “quality of life”**. Whilst these two notions are difficult to quantify, we all know – it is as logical as day follows night - that when we feel better we are better and more able to manage our everyday lives, cope with a crisis, and ultimately remain independent in our own homes – QED (“It is proved”).

Unlike many other local charities, The Debenham Project has managed, each year, to “balance the books”. We have never had to worry about funding an outing or covering our volunteers' expenses. This is due to the spontaneous generosity of so many in our community. For example, Sarah Corner and Tammi King, with the support of all our businesses and shops, organised the Debenham Easter Egg Hunt and Raffle, presenting the Project with the proceeds of £336. We received a generous donation from the family and friends of Margaret Ruth made in her memory, and Zoe George of Fit Club raised over £105, half of which she donated to the Project, by raffling off one of Thorntons limited edition Celebration Eggs. Also, Stephanie Stanhope and her partner (they will shortly be coming to live in Debenham) planned to do “The Three Peaks Challenge” last month and are giving the proceeds to The Debenham Project. Many many thanks to all of them.

With best wishes, Lynden

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